

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

- 1        1.        A memory comprising:
  - 2                at least one data storage area comprising a plurality of data storage locations;
  - 3                an access circuitry for accessing the data storage locations for retrieving or
  - 4                altering a data content thereof; and
  - 5                at least one first user-configurable flag element and a second user-configurable flag
  - 6                element associated with said storage area, the first and second flag elements being
  - 7                used to define a protected state of the data storage area against alteration of the
  - 8                content of the data storage locations thereof, the protected state defined by the at
  - 9                least one first flag element being user-removable, while the protected state defined
  - 10               by the second flag element being permanent and non-removable.
- 1        2.        The memory of claim 1, in which said second flag element can be set to  
2        define the permanent protected state of the respective data storage area irrespective  
3        of the fact that the at least one first flag element is set to define the removable  
4        protected state.
- 1        3.        The memory of claim 1, in which the at least one first flag element has  
2        a first state and a second state, in which any alteration of the data content of the  
3        respective data storage area is allowed and, respectively, inhibited, and  
4                the second flag element has a first state and a second state, in which  
5                changing of the state of the first flag element from the second state to the first state  
6                is allowed and, respectively, inhibited, so that when the second flag element is in the  
7                second state the respective data storage area is permanently protected against  
8                alteration of the data content thereof.
- 1        4.        The memory of claim 1, in which the at least one first flag element  
2        comprises a non-volatile programmable and erasable storage element, and the  
3        second flag element comprises a one-time programmable non-volatile storage  
4        element.
- 1        5.        The memory of claim 3, in which the second flag element can be set  
2        into the second state only if the at least one first flag element is in the second state.
- 1        6.        The memory of claim 1, in which said at least one storage area  
2        comprises at least two storage areas, and in which for each of said at least two

3 storage areas a respective first and second user-configurable flag elements are  
4 provided.

1       7. The memory of claim 1, comprising at least one further data storage  
2 area comprising a plurality of storage locations, and user-configurable flag means  
3 associated with said at least one further data storage area adapted to define a  
4 protected state of the at least one further data storage area against the alteration of  
5 the content of the respective storage locations, said protected state being removable  
6 by the user and not permanent.

1       8. The memory of claim 1, comprising means for conditioning the  
2 configuring of said first and second flag elements by the user on the recognition of  
3 the user by the memory.

1       9. A memory, comprising:  
2           a first data-storage portion;  
3           a first status portion corresponding to and operable to indicate first and  
4 second states of the first data-storage portion; and  
5           a second status portion corresponding to and operable to indicate a third state  
6 of the first data-storage portion.

1       10. The memory of claim 9 wherein the second status portion is operable to  
2 indicate the third state only when the first status portion indicates the second state.

1       11. The memory of claim 9 wherein the second status portion is inoperable  
2 to indicate the third state when the first status portion indicates the first state.

1       12. The memory of claim 9, further comprising a second data-storage  
2 portion inoperable to be in the third state.

1       13. The memory of claim 9, further comprising a second data-storage  
2 portion inoperable to be in the second and/or third states.

1       14. The memory of claim 9, wherein the first state comprises a modifiable  
2 state.

1       15. The memory of claim 9, wherein the second state comprises a  
2 revocable unmodifiable state.

1           16. The memory of claim 9, wherein the third state comprises an  
2 irrevocable unmodifiable state.

1           17. A method, comprising:  
2           receiving a request to modify a memory sector having a plurality of states; and  
3           granting the request to modify if the sector is in a first state of the plurality,  
4           denying the request to modify if the sector is in a second and/or third state of the  
5           plurality.

1           18. A method, comprising:  
2           receiving a request to transition a memory sector from a second or third state  
3           to a first state; and  
4           granting the request to transition if the sector is in the second state, denying  
5           the request to transition if the portion is in the third state.

1           19. A method, comprising:  
2           transitioning a memory sector to a revocable unmodifiable state; and  
3           transitioning the memory sector to an irrevocable unmodifiable state only after  
4           transitioning the memory sector to the revocable unmodifiable state.

1           20. An electronic system, comprising:  
2           a memory device, comprising:  
3            a first data storage portion;  
4            a first memory coupled and corresponding to the first portion, the first memory  
5           operable to indicate first and second states of the first portion; and  
6            a second memory coupled to the first memory and corresponding to the first  
7           portion, the second memory operable to indicate a third state of the first portion.